The COMMONWEAL

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Special Issue on the Farm

AT THE BEGINNING of the third term, as we think back over the Roosevelt administration's efforts for national well-being in the past eight years, there appear a number of milestones on the path of agricultural reconstruction. Not that the major difficulties have been solved by any means. Surpluses of the five major crops are at record levels, a large part of the 9,000,000 tenant farms and sharecroppers of the South still live under degrading conditions, 2,000,000 people displaced by dust bowls and agricultural mechanization are still roaming the country in search of the barest livelihood. These are but a few of the more striking farm problems. Much of the government's activity has been of the temporary emergency type—saving homes, setting up camps for migratory workers, pegging prices, paying direct benefits for "soil conservation," etc., etc. Something of this kind had to be done. But the government has gone considerably farther—its record in such fields as rural electrification, resettlement, shelter belts, encouragement of diversification, farm credit and farm security, the informative bulletins of the Department of Agriculture, is impressive. The Food Stamp plan is another great achievement. If the government has approached farm problems from more of a commercial than a human point of view, it was simply reflecting the viewpoint of the rural areas themselves. The basic attitude of our agricultural colleges and the heavy emphasis on producing the biggest yields of grains and livestock are apparently all of a piece. In any case the government should not be expected to do it all. It is consonant with the best in our democratic tradition that the people themselves should directly organize cooperative buying and marketing groups, credit unions and cooperative insurance bureau, 4-H clubs and rural community centers, cooperative utilities and medical care.

Types of Farms and Markets

The emphasis in this special issue of THE COMMONWEAL is on one of the remedies that has not received major attention from the administration. Health of soil, plant, animal and human being can be achieved by taking into full account Nature's laws of harmonious growth and decay. Most of the authors in this issue believe that this can best be achieved on the family farm unit, where the sense of personal ownership and personal achievement develop a loving, far-sighted care of the land impossible under tenancy, working for hire, or even private production of one or two single crops for the general market. Building up the soil in order to produce healthful food for the family and for the market are only part of the problem. There must be adequate cash income for at least a modicum of the amenities of modern life. The pre-war European market has vanished, although exchange arrangements might bring considerable new foreign outlets in Latin America. The possibility of food ships to carry some of our surpluses to needy Europe and China still remains. But the greatest single possibility for increasing the consumption of American farm products is the raising of the diet and clothing standards of our industrial populations. The farm problem is integral with that of urban industry. More employment and more wages mean more and better food in the American city. Experiments in this country with part-time farming and with farming designed first to supply most of the foodstuffs for the family are not yet on a scale to indicate conclusively the importance of their rôle in American social reconstruction. There is sufficient evidence, however, to indicate that their rôle in the national economy should be a considerable one.

Mandate for Purposes Unknown

IN THE SENATE'S general debate on the Lend-Lease Bill, the opposition held the initiative. The attack was vastly more spirited, more intelligent, conscientious and serious than the meager defense put up by the administration Senators. As a political performance and an example of polemical virtuosity, Senator Wheeler's long speech and his innumerable interpolations rank extremely high in the annals of the upper chamber. What's more, the

Lend-Lease

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increasing nervousness of journalistic and political spokesmen favoring the Bill, and the attempt to put on pressure and shorten the debates indicated that the opposition was effective and that it was believed to be gaining popular support around the country which proponents of the Bill feared. It probably can, as a matter of fact, be taken practically for granted that as a general rule the majority of the people of a country never freely or spontaneously want to go into a full scale war with a war draft, casualty list, etc.

The principal emotional appeal of the opposition was based on dislike for war, identifying the Bill as the all-but-final step into the present struggle. But logically the principal point seemed to be the anti-dictatorship attack. If the Bill is not the "decree law" Wheeler claims it is and which it appears formally to be without any question (who has even said it isn't?), it is in any case a very sparse and potent "enabling act," and it does not specify any program and only the most tenuous sort of objective—"To further promote the defense of the United States, and for other purposes." . . . That is the *only* statement of purpose the Bill contains!

The expectation is that the Bill will be used as a "mandate." It will be as blind a mandate as could be taken or given in such serious circumstances. Right now the forces for the Bill still claim it is not a program for war or authoritarian government, while the forces against it say it is. When the Bill is a law, will these positions be reversed?

Death of an Ex-King

IN THE COMMENT we have read since the death of the exiled King of Spain, Alfonso XIII, there has been much of that complacency which is normal where living editorial writers number the mistakes of the unanswering dead. In a curious assumption that the faster Kings disappeared the better it was for democracy, there was notable also in the obituaries a return to the certainties of that happy and inevitable progress that consoled the world some fifty years ago. We are not monarchists but we cannot help thinking it funny when liberals in a totalitarian world congratulate themselves on the declining importance of Kings.

Alfonso XIII

For so many years have Alfonso's errors been manifest—as were public also the proof of personal bravery and the sad evidence of personal misfortune—that all feel competent to judge what he did and explain why he failed. In our view the importance of his action in the long story of Spain's decline was never very great and whatever interest there may be in studying that action lies almost entirely in the light it throws on his character. It is as a man that Alfonso may be studied in a quieter future. There would be much to say about heredity; one would seek to know what it was which allowed him a certain dignity in trivial circumstance, and it would be necessary to measure the influence of his country's fate upon his own. It might also be possible in a parenthesis to measure the influence of his country's fate upon the fate of our own. Alfonso was a young man of twelve when we were "remembering the Maine." Probably the name Cervera, the name Dewey, the name McKinley were the first to personify for him enduring disaster—Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the first places from which he was exiled. But for us, it was in the early days of this man's not protracted life that there came the moment when we decided to accept colonial possessions. It was in 1898 that idealism, the ever-fond companion of investment, created the far flung positions we must forget now or defend. It might have been wise for us to have remembered at the death of this King what happened in his youth.

Learning Law by Application

DELAWARE'S Attorney General, Mr. James R. Morford, a logical and vigorous official, believes in the reality of law. The state legislature seems, by a narrow margin, to be less certain. A recent vote showed the Senate in favor of local option on the subject of Sunday observance, while the House of Representatives by three votes defeated the amendment and preserved the state's 200-year-old blue laws on the statute books with their pristine coloring still unmodified. This of course was an act of mere theoretical piety (at the highest view), since local option has long prevailed in practice, and nobody (including the House itself, as its current resolution shows) believes that the blue laws are enforceable. The Attorney General, however, is properly alive to the dangers of this anomalous situation, and has resolved upon a showdown, to demonstrate to the citizens the nature of a law and educate them to repeal what they no longer think should be obeyed. Declaring that the House vote gives him an explicit mandate to enforce the old Sabbath regulations, he has started a crusade of representative arresting designed to show their full scope. As the only Sunday occupations they permit are church-going, walking, and reading at home, the first Sunday's haul was a sampling of some hundreds of bus drivers, milkmen, drug clerks, restaurant owners, etc. The drive will intensify until even the sweepers of their own sidewalks and the listeners to state programs on their own radios may eventually be brought in also. The bizarre element in the whole affair (for which the responsibility rests with the lawmakers) has inevitably given rise to a kind of circus-time publicity; but the demonstra-

Delaware's Test

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tion has sound value that citizens may be trusted to see. Even arrest and a possible nominal fine are a relatively painless price to pay for bad laws. The more usual price is moral confusion, police corruption and growing disrespect for all law.

Coordinated Aid for China

American Opportunity

FROM time to time THE COMMONWEAL has commented on the admirable work carried on in embattled China by such organizations as the American Bureau for Medical Aid in China and the American Committee for Chinese Industrial Cooperatives. Certain organizations are doing excellent work but our general apathy toward the plight of the Chinese people has been a national disgrace. Perhaps this is one reason for the merging of seven committees such as the above into United China Relief, Inc., and their joint drive for $5,000,000 before July 31. Much can be expected from the pooling of the resources and personal contacts of all seven committees in one big drive. And there are the strongest of dramatic elements to be utilized in such an appeal. Politically there is the new firmness in our policy in the Far East and the advantage in strengthening the resistance of the Chinese people. There are millions of needy refugees from the war zones. Happily American money goes a long way in China—a year's food, shelter and education of a Chinese war orphan costs $20. And there is the spectacle of a brave people setting up their own cooperative machine shops and other factories to make what necessities they can no longer purchase from abroad. Let us hope the American people will see what their donations will do and at long last rise to the occasion.

New York's Mr. Moses

Latest Bulletin

NO COMMUNITY which is served by an official phenomenon like Mr. Robert Moses, New York's Park Commissioner, can ever be sure it has found the proper formula to apply. Mr. Moses, so to speak, stretches in both directions farther than the eye can reach. As regards his job, he is an expert among the experts. No one who has observed New York's park system take on spaciousness, order, beauty and civilized adaptability for the purpose for which parks are made, to wit, to pleasure and re-create the populace, can mistake the trained knowledge and irresistible creative instinct behind all this. But there is a great deal besides parks in Mr. Moses's peppery system, and the newspapers carry on an almost continuous running account of how it comes out. We are not saying he is all wrong or all right in his bouts with this one or that one; possibly the expertness carries over at least in part from one field to another. But we feel it is safe to say he is not always as right as he supposes he is, and as his gift for pointed and voluble expression might persuade the delighted bystander he is. There was the minor war with the local head of WPA. There is the recent plan to move the city's aquarium from Battery Park, where it has been a venerated and much-visited landmark for almost fifty years, to Bronx Park, where it will be just another exhibit—a plan persisted in in the teeth of agitated objectors, whom Mr. Moses derides as being "woozy with sentiment." And now there is the Park Commissioner's little brochure to the Mayor on the subject of the city's museums and libraries, which to be brief he finds in the main duplicative, musty and dead. Beyond cautiously edging in the remark that he is in some instances not wholly wrong, we will not step into the crossfire of what is shaping into a fine local row.

Defending Democracy through Communty Action

Can Do What Co-ops

INTRODUCING a special agricultural number gives us a chance to focus attention on the social possibilities inherent in the consumers' cooperative movement. It is an institution operative in both city and rural area, but thus far American cooperatives have made their greatest strides in farm districts. There are fewer complexities out there, fewer competitors for public attention; cooperative organizations can play a much larger part in the lives of the families on the land. It has been demonstrated most notably by the extension work of St. Francis Xavier University in eastern Nova Scotia but also in hundreds of communities in all parts of the United States and Canada that consumers cooperation can provide the best form of adult education yet devised. When a group of people come together to study systematically their own community problems—how to start a credit union, to build new low-cost homes, set up a medical service, build an electric plant or start a cooperative store, there is nothing academic about their approach. They are preparing for action. But as the study progresses they absorb more and more economics, history, psychology; the desire for knowledge grows. More than that, as any observant visitor can testify, people in such communities are conscious of a new zest in life, a new purpose in living which is bigger than themselves. One project leads to another for the good of the community. People like this with a program, a tangible purpose, an effective means of expressing their solidarity with their neighbors, form a real bulwark in the defense of true democracy, whether totalitarian collectivism threatens from within or beyond our shores.

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The Burial of Max Phillips

By Albert Eisele

THE DAY was blustery and cold, and it was decided, under the circumstances, that Mary and the children would stay at home and Edward alone go to the funeral. The baby was just getting over a sick spell, and besides, Max Phillips was not a relative—as a matter of fact he was hardly a neighbor, living seven miles away. But Max Phillips lay dead, and was today to be buried: Edward for years had had a limited acquaintance with him, and the distance of seven miles, in a Midwest rural area, was ordinarily insufficient to prevent one's attendance at the final rites of another.

It was in February, and of snow there was not the slightest trace. A drought that had begun in previous autumn had extended throughout the winter until now the fields were heavy with a fine, dry dust. High in the heavens great clouds moved swiftly, now and then breaking suddenly apart and permitting a pearly sunlight to flood the world. The cold wind was rising and was beginning to sweep up the dust and whirl it low over the snowless fields and groves.

They were taking Max Phillips to church. A few had wondered about that, for Max Phillips had not gone to Mass regularly. On the other hand he had always made his Easter duty and contributed to the support of his pastor. He had lived quietly, had worked hard and had wronged no man. The only quarrel he was ever known to have had was with a neighbor over an intake tile: it was one of those drainage fusses and no violence was exercised, except that one night the neighbor had plugged the tile with old overalls and Max Phillips on the following night had pulled the old clothes out again. Max Phillips had been a bachelor and for years had lived alone on his small farm. His had been that remote and obscure life so often found in rural bachelors, and in him these qualities had been further enhanced by the farm itself, situated as it was along a secondary country road, with the buildings "back in the field."

Reaching the Phillips farmplace, Edward Traynor found only a scattering of cars. But of course it would not be a large funeral. Max Phillips never went anywhere, except to town to do the trading. His Sunday-best suit of clothes was one that he had had for years and years, one that had gone in and out of style several times. There would be no Knights of Columbus there in a body because Max Phillips did not belong to the order. His church contacts were few, his social contacts nil. He did not belong to the Farm Bureau. A man like that never had a large funeral.

Edward Traynor parked his car near a corncrib and alongside a wagon. He took keen note of the wagon, of its whiffletrees, its neckyoke. It was funny how, after a man was dead, his belongings always came into such compelling focus. It was so with money, which heirs fought over; but it was also so, and more happily, with the day-by-day minutiae from which a man had been forever removed but which were still heavy with his presence.

The house was old and drab. Around the foundation, and extending to a few of the weatherboards, a wide band of tar paper ran like a heavy stroke from a huge black crayon. There was really no need for the bit of crepe that hung on the door.

The casket, too, was black and inexpensive. On a little table nearby stood a vessel of holy water and a palm—unmistakably the mark of Mrs. Donovan, a neighbor and good woman that she was. Edward knelt down and said a prayer, then rose, dipped the palm into the holy water and with it blessed the deceased. Mrs. Donovan herself then appeared and administered an additional sprinkling—as if to make up, in a measure, for some of the sprinklings that Max Phillips had missed in life.

And soon it was time to leave for the church. The undertaker marshaled the pall bearers and they maneuvered the casket out through the front door, in itself as narrow as a grave. The racing skies parted just then and flooded the casket and the bareheaded bearers with the mellow light of a sun that was nearer with spring; but the sun in another minute was swallowed up again, while the rising wind further darkened the day by sweeping dust in great clouds low over the fields.

The procession got under way. It had gone but a mile or so when Edward's car began to jolt. He fell out of line. A tire was flat, and in addition there was no spare. Ahead the road turned off to right angles. The wind roared with sudden intensity. Through the storm was arched a vista along the base of which the procession moved, and though the procession was short, it both began and ended in dust. Dust hid the hearse, and dust also swallowed up the final car.

Edward Traynor repaired his tire, but the dilapidated pump hissed at him in derision and by the time he was ready to go again he felt sure

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that the funeral Mass would be half-over with. He decided, therefore, to take a short cut to the cemetery and wait there until the procession came from the church.

He drove into the cemetery, which was bordered by evergreens, and then walked over to the tool house. There was a figure there. It was the sexton.

"Mean wind, ain't it?" said the sexton. "I thought it was a funeral coming when I saw your car. It's getting to be quite a dust storm. Come on inside—this wind is enough to blow mules' tails straight out behind. Cemeteries are always on high spots, where the wind hits 'em."

The tool house was small and cheerless. A work shelf was littered with advertising matter pertaining to caskets and vaults. "There's no stove in here," the sexton apologized. "We ought to have a stove in here so we could keep warm while waiting. I do a lot of waiting here, and not for Gabriel's horn, either." The sexton went to the shack's lone window and peered out, and then opened the door for a better view. The wind moaned in the evergreens and the dust clouds rose and fell, but no funeral procession was to be seen.

The sexton closed the door: "So you're waiting for that Phillips funeral, eh? He lived kind of off by himself in the posthole country, didn't he? There's another funeral coming here today—a boy. He got hit on a bike. They're bringing him from Richmond—they used to live here and got a plot all paid for, and so they're burying him here. It's only thirty miles. I thought that was them coming when you drove in through the dust. Two funerals today—big business—pretty near as bad as war!" and here the sexton held up the four fingers of each hand and undulated them, in imitation of bayonets on the march.

"Say, but it's getting dry, ain't it?" the sexton resumed. "Seeding time pretty near here again, and no moisture since early last fall. Look at those evergreens out there—no snow under 'em! They don't look natural with no snow under 'em. They always got snow under 'em till way late in spring. I've known snow under 'em in May. Of course, I don't like a whole lot of snow, so that people get stuck in cemeteries—people always get stuck in cemeteries soon enough—but I do like to see the ground covered, so the frost don't go so deep. 'Tain't so bad this year, because the ground is pretty near too dry to freeze, but ordinarily when there's no snow a man's got to pick through two feet of frost for a grave." He peered out of the window again, then went on: "I get my pay direct from the cemetery association, but you know there are a lot of fellows, as soon as they got a death in the family, they expect all kinds of credit. And of course they want the grave dug right away—a grave ain't one of those odd jobs that can wait till Sunday. But no sir—a sexton can't give credit—if he did he'd be broke all the time!" He stationed himself by the window: "You know, in the spring you farmers are always saying that you'd like a real good rain, to loosen up the ground. Well, that goes for me, too! It digs better. Hello, something's coming!" He went outside. Edward Traynor followed.

"That's the Richmond funeral," said the sexton. "The little boy." He went over toward the grave, and Edward continued to follow.

Though it was a small boy being buried, and from thirty miles distant, a considerable number of mourners had followed the body to its last resting place. Edward Traynor drew near. Chiding himself for his curiosity, he stood in the outskirts of the grieving circle.

The boy had been one of the younger members of the family. Older brothers and sisters stood weeping at the grave. The mother, the usual veiled figure in black, stood supported by the father. The priest read the prayers, and then the casket was lowered. The brothers and the sisters wept afresh; the mother rent the air with sudden wails. The funeral prayers were ended, and then the priest said: "And now we'll say a prayer for the repose of the soul of the next person to be buried in this cemetery." This prayer ended, they led the mother away; the others departed, and the sexton was left alone with his shovel.

Then the Phillips funeral appeared, moving in against a background of dust clouds. In a thin circle the mourners ranged themselves about the grave. The prayers were said. The nearest of kin among the mourners were two brothers: they stood stolid and heavy-footed. The dead man's neighbors were also solemn, attentive, not visibly moved—except for their bared heads they might have been part of a farm-auction sale ring.

And so Max Phillips was buried, *sans* tears, *sans* outward grief.

The few mourners of the second funeral dispersed themselves, and Edward Traynor, too, set out for home. It had been such a sad funeral. It was always a sad funeral when a child was buried. A child's soul was innocent. And there was that beautiful sentiment, seen occasionally on headstones, wherein children were proclaimed as having budded on earth and blossomed in Heaven. But not even an innocent soul, nor beautiful sentiments, could prevent mothers from crying out in anguish at the grave. And here Edward realized, with a mild surprise, that it was the child's funeral, to him merely the incidental one, that was uppermost in his thoughts.

The air was heavy with dust, but the sun was still breaking through at intervals and brightening up the countryside. A severe drought of several years ago had wrought much havoc with farmstead groves, where among the branches the

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decorticated deadwood now caught the mid-day sun and gleamed as with silver. These farmstead groves, with their dying trees, in some way served to veer Edward's thoughts again toward Max Phillips. But the boy was not forgotten—indeed, the two funerals seemed now to be in brotherhood, in a mystical union of some sort, and it was the union of a stronger entity and a weaker, with the weaker leaning upon the stronger, as the weak always leaned on the strong at a time of death. To Max Phillips, who was the weaker, the boy, the stronger, had at the last moment brought companionship and love. And the boy had had other surpluses—of mourners, of lamentations, and of innocence. And this surplus he now shared, as a saint might share his coat with a sinner.

Youth in The Corn Belt

What is happening to farm boys and girls.[1]

By O. E. Baker

LAST SPRING and summer, surveys of rural youth and of openings in agriculture for them were made in five counties in Indiana and one county in Ohio. These were only small sample surveys, but I hope they will serve as examples of the combination of research in the extension work which seems to me to offer real promise of service. These surveys were made by the youth, with the help of the county agricultural agent, and for the youth to use in some of the meetings of the older youth groups this winter. A survey is expected to be made in one Illinois county this winter and another survey in Massachusetts; also possibly in North Dakota and North Carolina. In Ohio, all of Ross County was included; and in Indiana, all of Blackford and Hancock Counties, but only about half of La Porte County, and of Monroe and Orange Counties in the less fertile southern section of the state.

Work was started in Blackford County, and after helping members of the Country Life Club to take records for a week, I came to realize that a great change in the attitudes of farm youth and in their situation had occurred since my childhood in northwestern Ohio. Most of this change has taken place, probably, in the last ten years. I had expected that only one-quarter of the farm youth would express a preference for farming. Instead, two-thirds expressed such a preference, the proportions increasing with the age of the youth. On the other hand, of the young men farming with their fathers in some sort of partnership, 94 percent preferred farming as an occupation. The reasons given for this preference were various, but about half of them included the word freedom somewhere in the answer. I recall another answer which was also typical. The young man who gave it said, "I worked 6 days a week in a factory, then 4 days, then 2 days, and farming is better than 2 days' work a week in a factory."

Father-and-Son partnerships

Associated with this diminished economic opportunity in the cities is an increased opportunity in farming for some youth. Many fathers have been taking their sons into partnership. This is nothing new, but the practice is evidently expanding rapidly. In the four townships of Blackford County, as a result of a survey of every farm based on the Agricultural Adjustment Administration records and on interviews with the county and township committeemen of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, also a few other well-informed farmers, we found 43 youths who, these committeemen said, had been taken into partnership by their fathers during the last five years. These committeemen estimated that there would be 74 such partnerships taking place during the next five years. The number of openings for farm tenants is decreasing.

The Corn Belt portion of Indiana is shifting rapidly from a largely commercial system of farming with much hired labor to a partly commercial, partly familistic, system. The year-round hired man is almost gone—only about 50 are left on the 1,100 farms of Blackford County—and tenancy is diminishing. The first rung on the agricultural ladder has practically disappeared and the second rung is being broken. The father-and-son partnerships, so called, that are increasing rapidly will lead on to inheritance, and the opportunity for a farm laborer's son or tenant's son to get a farm, or even remain in farming, is being rapidly contracted.

[1] Excerpts from an address delivered at the fifty-fourth annual convention of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Chicago, Ill.

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This contraction is occurring not only because of the increase in number of partnerships but also because of decrease in the number of desirable farms. A father-and-son partnership means in most cases a tractor, for the son wants to keep up with the Joneses; and in any case a tractor is a very useful machine. Then, in order to pay for the tractor and utilize the power available, another farm must be rented or purchased; it may be adjacent or it may be 10 miles away. Sometimes it is a farm of an aged farmer who continues to live in the house, sometimes the small farm of a part-time farmer who can't afford to get the equipment to operate his 40-acre parcel of land; but more commonly it is a farm that has been operated by a tenant who is frequently pushed off the land.

Our schedule did not include questions as to what happens to tenants who have been dispossessed by the expanding operations of other farmers. But two members of the Country Life Club in Blackford County collected data in one township for me. Two such tenants rose to ownership during the last five years, three moved to larger tenant farms, five obtained other farms of about the same size, three became day laborers in the country, and five went to town and their present occupation is unknown. Eight, apparently, rose in economic status, five remained stationary, and eight probably declined in status.

The enlargement of farms

The results of these rural-youth surveys in Indiana are only partly tabulated, so my picture must be fragmentary. For use in this paper, I hastily counted up the farms in one typical township of Blackford County, and found 161 farms owner-operated with no additional farm owned or rented. These averaged 81 acres in size. There were 55 similar farms tenant-operated, and these averaged 86 acres in size. There were 23 farmers, often with son associated, who operated one additional tract of land, in most cases a former farm. These, usually two-man farms, averaged 165 acres in size. Eight tenants were also operating an additional tract of land, and these farms likewise averaged 165 acres in size. Finally, there were 15 farm owners and 2 tenants who operated two or more additional tracts of land, mostly former farms. These enlarged farms averaged 278 acres for those operated by part-owners, and 247 acres for those operated by the two tenants. From these figures one big farm of 2,100 acres is excluded. This farm includes 20 or more former farms, nearly all purchased during the last ten years, and is now operated by a farmer and three very capable sons, aided by three year-round hired men. The land is better farmed than before, but most of the buildings are deteriorating.

One-fifth of the farms in this township—those consisting of two or more separated tracts of land—include two-fifths of the land in the township. This larger and rapidly increasing kind of farm averages 233 acres in size, not an excessive amount for a father and son to operate jointly. It is primarily this expansion in the size of the farm, facilitated by the tractor and the use of capital that the father provides the son, which explains, in my opinion, why two-thirds of the young men 18 to 28 years of age in this county expressed a preference for farming. Some of them are getting a chance to do something worth while—marry and have a home, and live a respectable life—and more would like such a chance.

But only 32 out of the 183 rural youth 18 to 28 years of age were farming with father, and 16 more were farming for themselves—about one-quarter in all. Seventeen were working at home for wages and 36 were working for board, lodging and spending money. Forty-four were working away from home, 9 were in mixed employment and 29 were in school. The average earnings of the young men farming for themselves was $790; of those farming with father, about $600, to which should be added perhaps $350 for board and room. The earnings of those working at home for wages was $200, of those working at home for board and spending money, mostly on small farms, only $151. Those working away from home received $674, and lived mostly on small farms. Nearly half of these youths working away from home were working on other farms. The annual average earnings of the young women was much less—$75 for homemakers, $80 for those working in parents' home and $460 for those working away from home. The average investment made so far by the youth farming for themselves was $1,610 and by those farming with father was $748.

Social characteristics of youth

One of the most significant facts revealed by the survey in Blackford County was the rapid decrease in number of rural youth; from 36 boys and 24 girls 18 years of age to 7 boys and 2 girls 28 years of age. Apparently, fully three-fourths of the youth of these ages have left the farms. But relatively few have gone outside the county, 282 of the 406 boys who graduated from the eighth grade of the rural school between 1927 and 1936 inclusive, or 70 percent, are still living in Blackford County. More than 40 percent of these boys are engaged in farm work. Only 93 boys of the 406 graduated were living in other counties of Indiana, and only 21 were living outside the state. Among the 379 girl graduates of the eighth grade, 270 were still living in Blackford County. However, only 115 of them were homemakers or doing housework on the farms. More had married nonfarm husbands than farming husbands. There has evidently been a heavy migration from the farms to Hartford City and

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Montpelier, the two towns in the county. Moreover, more than half of the rural youth were working part-time or full-time away from home.

Practically all the rural youth in Blackford County have attended high school. Over three-fourths of the young men and four-fifths of the young women are high-school graduates. But only 4 percent of the men and 5 percent of the women have attended college. Many have gone to college, but few have returned to the farms. Over one-third of the young men have taken vocational agriculture courses and nearly half the young women have had courses in home economics. With the extension of facilities these proportions will doubtless increase. Fifty-five percent of the young men and 61 percent of the young women have been 4-H club members, and the proportions are much higher for the youth still in school. Fifty-five percent of the young men and 76 percent of the young women are church members. The church is the one outstanding social institution in these Indiana counties, other than the governmental agencies. Very few rural youth are members of a lodge or of other social organizations.

The most important recreations of the young men are movies, hunting, basketball and motoring; and of the young women, movies, reading and needlework. Dancing ranked sixth in importance among the young women, with seven dances a year, and thirteenth in importance among the young men, with two dances a year.

Attendance at movies, by contrast, averaged 39 times a year for the young women, and 36 times for the young men, involving an appreciable item of expenditure, especially for the young men. Some of the young men, more frequently those working at home for board, lodging and spending money, spent $50 a year for recreation, excluding automobile costs. In more than half of the homes of the rural youth there was a piano, in more than three-fourths electricity, and practically all had autos and radios. But less than a third had running water in the house, less than a fourth had a bathroom, and only one in eight had a furnace.

The more of these conveniences in the home, the smaller the proportion of the young women who wanted to live in the country. Of those who had only one or two conveniences in the home, 86 percent wanted to live in the country; of those having seven or eight conveniences, only 39 percent. Perhaps the women who had more conveniences in the home had more other urban contacts and were better prepared for urban life. Similarly, of those having only one or two conveniences, every young woman expressed a preference for homemaking as an occupation; but among those who had seven or eight conveniences, only 12 percent. Yet 38 percent of these luxury-enjoying women expressed a preference for nursing.

The downward curves, with increasing number of conveniences, are very similar for the percentage expressing a preference for living in the country and for homemaking. These ideas, apparently, are associated in the minds of the young women. But among the young men the number of conveniences exerted no consistent influence upon the proportions who preferred to live in the country, or farming to other occupations.

All the Living Give Thanks

We see the Spring come steady on,
The maples bleeding leaves, wet flowers,
Hepaticas, and bluets come
Behind them only fourteen hours,
And watch wild-cherry walk the woods
Upon rhodora's heel,
And always, always ruin fast
Upon the living steal,
We see the lights of anemones
Go out and new lamps come
Hung on the dogtooth violets,
And hear the first bees' hum
Pile up to thunderheads of sound
Above the dusky clover,
See white waves of daisies roll
Up hills and always cover over
The flowers of the Spring, and hear
Golden thunder rattle
And see the goldenrod go up
The pasture past the cattle,
And watch the frostflowers hurrying past
Ahead of blooms of frost,
Bright boys so different each from each
Into the men gone on and lost,
Wide-handed men so sure of strength,
The lovers seeming new
Constellations and new moons
Betrayed, see all men sinking through
The solid earth beside their friends,
And never a hand to reach them aid,
And children fall out among the stars
Before half of their games are played,
And newer men crowd older men
With Winter on their hair
Off the green world among bare stars,
And star by star extinguished there,
And always, always the swift shade
Behind each running day
And the wise noses of the hounds
On every track the hare has made,
The eyes of lynxes and of doves
Burning out alway,
See sweet principalities
Of bees consume the Summer saved,
And see the grain of bitter snow
Where the sweet green corn leaves waved!

And great thanks we the living give
To watch the ruin come, and live.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN.

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Our Soil is Ailing

A plea we do something about feeding the bugs underground.

By John C. Rawe

AMERICAN soil statistics give an accurate estimate of the damage done by erosion. In a few generations one-third of the original fertility of our soil has been destroyed. Two hundred and eighty-two million acres lie ruined and impoverished by erosion. One-fourth to three-fourths of the top-soil on 775 million additional acres has washed from hillsides and buried rich bottomlands with sand and clay. This erosion works its way into the units of human society. Families and communities wash out and blow out. Migrants from such lands number in the millions.

Not only do dust storms and soil-devouring floods destroy whole farms, but everywhere gullies, weeds, plant diseases and animal diseases are on the increase. American agriculture reports that the plants and animals are sick. Plant virus, plant fungus, plant insect, animal disease, all are marching across the fields. Each year destruction wrought by beetle, weevil, bollworm, grasshopper, cricket, borer, screwworm and grub is on the increase; 750,000 kinds of insects are known, relentless enemies that jeopardize men, plants and animals. All classes of our livestock and fowl are more and more subject to diseases, general unthriftiness and frequently death.

In 1938 there were 200,000 cases of sleeping sickness in horses, with 40,000 deaths. Paratuberculosis, Bang's disease, mastitis, and fever tick spread through the herds of American cattle. Since 1934 the "test-and-slaughter" method for the eradication of Bang's disease has cost the Federal and State governments over $60,000,000 in indemnities and operating expenses. Hogs and sheep are plagued with internal and external parasites. In places where urban-minded specialists have induced the hen, the cow and the bee to get on the belt line, speed up production and give us the "mass-production egg," "mass-production milk" and "mass-production honey," some strange new maladies have made their appearance. It would seem that one does not set the speeds for production in the laws of nature. They follow their own speed or they slow up in disease or stop in death.

Fear of plant disease and fear of animal disease has already led many farmers to refuse to have on their farms certain plants and animals which they should have to keep the proper farm balance in crop-rotation and livestock. Farmers plant and sow and then stock up with fungicides, insecticides, germicides, poison sprays, vaccines and serums. Farm management is becoming more and more a battle with bugs.

Bureaus of Entomology are set up. Specialist after specialist studies some fresh fragment about this bug or that bug. Insect and disease literature pours out in vast volume. And I suppose the best farmer in this setup would be the one who knew the most about the most bugs and methods to combat them.

However, none of this can form a basis for sound agriculture. In the war on bugs are we perhaps tinkering with the consequences of initial lack of science in the agricultural process? Are insects and fungi causes in agriculture or are they results? Are they the result of unsuitable varieties of crops? Is the pest pointing out to us that the crop is improperly nourished? Are the insect and fungi warning us that we have no sound system of soil management in our farming program? Are they warning us that we must change our care and treatment of the soil, if we wish to grow healthy crops?

Boussingault and Liebig in the early nineteenth century started the movement to make soil care and renewal a matter of chemistry. The ashes of plants gave these men some information about the requirement of crops. Their soil program was this: analyze the ashes of good plants, then analyze your soil, apply the salts in which you find a deficiency in your soil from year to year, and you can raise the same crop on the same ground indefinitely. This was popular news in a factory-minded world. After all it made the farm a factory: good news in a world which puts factories first. It was supposed to put an end to the very old humus theory always persisting among real farmers. In a factory world it seemed so progressive to go to factories and haul away boxcars and truck loads of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. The NPK mentality became so prevalent that farmers practically everywhere, except the small holders in China and India, forgot the value of manure from livestock and the value of decayed vegetable matter for proper soil care. Old vegetable matter was burned. Composting and the

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spreading of manure was neglected. Very little continued to be taught about the proper fermentation, decomposition and drying of manure before application to the soil. No plans were made to save the valuable liquid portions of manure. The raising and management of livestock was often dropped out of the farm plan. In the soil-mining parlance of the day, it was said that one could always buy chemical fertilizers, the double and triple "artificials," the super-fertilizers.

Some people realized early in the history of agricultural chemistry that certain soil deficiencies in the matter of crop production were not remedied by chemistry. Hilgard and King taught that there was also the question of soil physics, the physical texture of the soil. Pasteur opened up a vast new world in the top-soil, the world of soil bacteria, an underground "livestock" herd which in good soil equals the weight of the livestock herds which can graze on a given area. Darwin made a notable contribution to soil and its complex life when he studied the earthworm and its work in soil restoration. Winogradsky discovered the soil organisms concerned with the nitrification of organic matter. A School of Soil Science in Russia led to a geological approach to soil problems and soil classification according to profile and geological origin. What good, practical farmers always knew, a few specialists in agriculture have finally rediscovered; namely, that soil fertility embraces at least four sciences: soil chemistry, soil physics, soil bacteriology and soil geology.

But our factory-minded American people (this includes very many of those living on the land and very many of those who are engaged in the administration and research of American agriculture) do not pay much attention to anything but soil chemistry and the promotion of artificial fertilizers. The bag of "chemical manure," cheap, concentrated, super, double, triple, etc., waits for us at the corner store. When will American agriculture wake up to the fact that a bag of inert chemical and a can of spray is not the cure for a sick soil?

We, both city and rural people, need to know and our agricultural leaders ought to tell us and bring into their demonstration activity much more about the work of Bennett and Lord, the work of Howard and Pfeiffer. On each farm there must be a knowledge of contour fencing and contour cultivation, shelterbelts, windbreaks and little drop-in-let dams, the sound soil conservation work of Bennett and Lord. On each farm there must be a knowledge of humus-making, compost piles, the care and feeding of soil microbes, the care of the earthworm, rotation of crops and the proper supply of livestock, the sound biological approach to soil use in the work of Howard and Pfeiffer. Howard and Pfeiffer prove that when the soil microbe is cared for and brought into the plant-growing process, the plant itself develops high qualities of disease resistance and pest resistance.

The job in agriculture is not to break up the complex biological system of soil, soil microbe, plant and animal into fragmentary parts. When Ph.D.'s work on fragmentary parts, no one ever puts these parts together again. On the farm, one has the job of keeping the complex biological system healthy and in biological gear. Even farm mechanizers and commercializers probably have brains enough to know that you don't raise standards of living by breaking up biological complexes. A break in a life cycle leads to sickness and death. Man belongs in the cycle.

Are there biological agents that accelerate life decay, and therefore speed up growth? Is there a kitchen in the soil itself where food is prepared for plants, and is the kitchen full of workers? Pasteur, Darwin, Howard, Pfeiffer and Nicol have studied the workers in the good soil; the earthworms, the soil bacteria with special functions, the cellulose-decomposing bacteria, the phenol-decomposing bacteria, the free-living azotobacters and the legume-nodule azotobacters. They dissolve salts. They fix nitrogen. They act as a living bridge, sometimes directly connecting soil and crop. There is much more in the good soil than a mere mechanical bridge and the transfer of mere chemical salts from ground to plant.

The soil bacteria multiply enormously (20 to 50 million in a gram of soil) where they receive regular supplies of organic food, fresh supplies of animal and vegetable wastes. They do their best work in compost piles. In fields where dead organic matter is not available, the plant food makers, the azotobacters and the earthworms die out. Where the farm becomes a mere chemical dump and a factory, they disappear. When the soil bacteria disappear, soil texture is destroyed. Soil aeration is impeded. The supply of water and dissolved salts for the plant roots is reduced. The correct biological synthesis of carbohydrates and proteins becomes disturbed. The sick plant is ready for disease and pest.

Life, wherever it informs matter, is growth and decay. And decay is a necessary counterpart. One cannot accelerate healthful growth unless one accelerates decay. On the farm one may not speed up growth and *remove* decay, that is, one may not remove the activity of soil microbes on plant and animal waste in the top-soils and in the compost piles. Monoculture or any reduction of land use to one or a few crops breaks the life cycle, removes decay. The wheel of life can function effectively only when soil microbes, adequate supplies of plant and animal waste, a variety of crops and a variety of animals come into gear on each small unit of land. This is the formula for scien-

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tific production on the land, the formula for security, for freedom, for peace, for health, a way of living in which all good human standards can rise.

This land formula involves ownership, an ownership which gives security of tenure on a family basis. Good soil conservation and good soil practice require the farm family with roots in its own acres. Land and men are naturally adjusted to the family unit. When this unit is ignored, land and men erode. Land is not merely a tool for production. It is destined by a good Providence to be a place for the homestead of a family, a place where a family establishes a way of living in a diversified and rotated supply of family necessities first, and only secondly, crop or livestock production for the market.

Land, family land can give a life of independence, security, dignity. Land itself cannot be conserved unless it is frequently covered by the shadow of its owner. The shadow of the owner constitutes the best land "fertilizer," the best instrument for soil conservation. And when this family shadow, in the case of full-time farming, ranges over a twenty acre minimum to a three hundred acre maximum, when family supplies are first planned on such farms, then we have communities of farm families that enrich the earth, and we have healthy soils which enrich these same families.

The family tied to its land and its livestock by affection keeps a guard over its soil. Family animals thrive on personal attention. The flitting tenant family will not do what is required to renew fertility. Men, operating in commercial units, abandon family diversification for family needs. They abandon diversification for soil needs. They ravish the soil. They abandon all science in agriculture, neglecting its biology, to reduce agriculture and all life to a mere mechanism.

Both the soil and the family in the natural and best orders of things on the land demand for their security that the land be covered with a network of homesteads, a network of homes, productive for the family. A network of tractors and one-and-two-crop fields breaks the life cycle. Earthworms, azotobacters, plants, animals and men: all living things tend to lose their place in such a soil-ravishing environment. And wind and water intensify their ruinous work. In the tractor and one-and-two-crop sections of American agriculture, we have the greatest soil destruction, the most appalling human erosion.

Sound, scientific, progressive agriculture is the production of a large variety of healthful life, plants and animals, on each family-unit farm. A trip through the countryside is enough to prove to anyone with eyes open that land specialization, land mechanization and land commercialization destroy fertility of soils, lower living standards and reduce the population. They bring erosion of men, erosion of animals, erosion of plants, erosion of soils. Big-unit mechanization and big-unit specialization cannot give us the necessary biological correlation in land use. The few efficient mechanical operations which the mechanical farmer makes do not correct the neglect of the biological needs of fields. Tilling the soil is no factory specialty. It is not a job for commercialized and mechanized farm families operating on big units. Such developments can give us more expert soil bandits. They cannot give us better producers of better foods. Farming is a family job on a small, highly diversified land unit. Agriculture is a family's intelligent care and biological management of a variety of healthful living plants and a variety of healthful living animals. In the soil domain, things are alive. And as living things they are poles asunder from chemistry, physics, mechanics and dead factory processes of production.

A Dirt Farmer's Program for Agriculture

By FERDINAND J. WIENER

AN EDITOR out our way has expressed the opinion that it is useless to attempt to solve the farm problem, that it will always be with us, a necessary evil that we should not expect to solve, as we must live with it in order to have something to argue about. This seems to me an attitude of despair. Having spent my whole life on the land I am convinced that there are planks for a workable farm program that would be suitable for every part of the United States, for cattlemen or raisin-growers, poultrymen or wheat-farmers, cotton-growers or truck-farmers. Certain principles of intelligent social and economic action, if formed into a program, would go undeniably to the very roots of the economic and social troubles of a depressed agriculture. Any farmer in any part of our blessed land can nail this program to his barn door.

No apologies are offered for any wisps of straw or tufts of cornsilk which may be found clinging to this briefly stated program.

(1) *Farming as a way of life.* We need a Christian philosophy of life on the land, that will engender within us a justifiable pride and motivation to live on the land, together with a type of education for the young that will glorify the Christian dignity of agrarian life. Intensive application of Christian principles must be applied to farm problems. Our philosophy must be our own, free from the ideas of a false liberalism, which listens to materialism and finance-capitalism.

(2) *Family-sized and family-owned farms.* There is a world of meaning in those few words, spelling ability to care for self and contentment in

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home-ownership. Let every farmer be his own landlord and laborer. There's nothing like owning a farm one can handle according to one's ability.

(3) *Self-reliance and mutual help.* Friendly government cooperation is necessary and desirable, but let's not rely on the AAA checks to carry us over the crest of the hill. It smacks of the breadline philosophy "When do we eat?" We must not rely too much on politicians and government aid alone; we may finally lose our cherished liberties and be buried with perfectly good brains unused besides. The earmarks of ignorant, suspicious, distrustful, jealous and small men must be put aside; instead we must unite as Christians in justice and charity with such organizations as producer and consumer cooperatives, credit unions, etc., using these cooperatives as stepping stones to vocational groups. Let us unite, not for dollars and cents, but for the sake of good common sense and Christian brotherhood.

(4) *Decentralization of industry.* Certain types of economic enterprises to be conducted by ourselves. Unabashed, we declare that no particular set of men have received an exclusive right from Heaven to hold monopolies over the processing and distribution of agricultural products. The producer of a bushel of wheat has a perfect right to hand it over to the ultimate consumer in the form of a bag of flour. Not only will much money be saved, but a host of evils in society such as monopolistic control, excessive handling, crowding of population, inadequate housing, etc., etc., might be avoided.

(5) *Farm ownership must be safeguarded.* While commendable work has been done in this direction, much is left to be done. We need long time credit, reasonable interest, scaling down of farm indebtedness, parity prices, equitable taxation, etc. In the matter of taxation, we might examine the proposition recommended in North Dakota that rural property be taxed on a new scientific basis—soil analysis, productive capacity, distance from market, etc. The domestic market can be developed by ridding the country of unemployment through a sensible peace-time policy, not a war-time policy that can collapse any time. Manufacturing munitions in huge quantities was not the normal manner of growth of our republic for the past 150 years; it is as abnormal as the chronically hungry man.

(6) *Agriculture, industry and government must sit together in conference at all times.* To ignore agriculture is to take away the cornerstone of an edifice. It will obviously become top-heavy; what further need be said?

(7) *Need for organization.* We must unite in neighborhood groups throughout the nation, discuss our problems, find the proper solutions. The discussion group can become a powerful factor in laying the groundwork for a united agricultural vocational group, national in scope.

(8) *Monetary reform.* This bugaboo always causes hard feelings, since there are many who feel that the private control of money is a gift sent from the gods and that no one should tamper with this sacred dispensation. Anyone who dares to criticize our present monetary system is often regarded as a menace to the republic and un-American. We would begin the reform with sound credit unions, the proper place where members really learn what money is and what it is for, and might continue to go on reforming the defects of the present system for the benefit of society. It is needless to repeat the many proofs given from time to time that our masters of finance are responsible for many of our present-day ills. But of course, a dumb farmer should know better than to speak out of turn, for if he had worked just a little harder, he might have been able to meet the interest due.

(9) *Vocational representation.* I'd rather be represented in the legislature and Congress as a farmer, not as a Democrat or Republican. I want to be represented by a man who will talk shop, instead of orating over what his party has done and what the other party has undone. The Holy Father's encyclical on the reconstruction of society is exactly what we should put into practice, although no doubt it's too idealistic for folks who might have to sacrifice something thereby.

(10) *Farm folk-schools, citizenship training, vocational training.* These institutions have been highly successful elsewhere. Human nature in America, although no better, is no worse than in other countries where these realities instead of economic sermons have brought rural life to a new and higher standard.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

LAST NIGHT (February 27)—I am writing on a train—I was one of several speakers who addressed an audience of about seven thousand people in Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium. Tomorrow night, in Atlantic City, N. J., I shall, God willing, speak to the Welsh societies celebrating Saint David's day. My subject tomorrow night will be the same as my last night's subject. The same theme that these articles deal with—"Religion and the World Crisis."

That subject dominated the great mass meeting of United Americans last night in Kansas City. It dominates the minds and souls of all thinking and prayerful Americans, uniting them as no lesser power is able to do in a spiritual and moral force which minor political and racial and even creedal differences cannot impair.

In Kansas City one morning paper has a monopoly. During my stay in this city, I found that the morning

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paper failed as a newspaper in a most deplorable fashion. As a newspaper veteran, I am shocked by the failure of the *Kansas City Star* to report what was real news in Kansas City, and for the whole nation—the news about the rally in the Missouri city's Municipal Auditorium of the United Americans.

As an American citizen, I also was shocked and worried by the failure of the citizens of Kansas City to do something effective to check the dictatorship of the business men who control the writers who compose the editorials and that portion of the news which these bosses permit the Kansas City people to know about.

That is a bad situation. It is bad for Kansas City's morals. It is bad for Kansas City's legitimate business interests. American people believe (until saddening experience shows them otherwise) that their newspapers try to tell the truth. They do not understand why men who claim (and truthfully) that the Press *must* be Free, should keep legitimate news from the public whose money supports their industry, simply because they—the business bosses of the newspaper business—do not want to give publicity to a rival newspaper man.

That the *Kansas City Star* should attack the *Kansas City Journal's* policies all along the line is all right. We need honest controversy in our journalism, as in our politics. But it is wrong in morals—it is wrong as business—and it is bad journalism to suppress legitimate news.

Kansas City's readers ought to compel the business bosses of the *Kansas City Star* to behave honestly. It is not honest journalism to suppress important news.

Well, if Kansas City's morning paper gave me a pain in the neck, Kansas City's afternoon paper, by giving space to the really important news of today, which is religious news, is something to be proud about, and thankful for.

This city of Missouri is taking a high place among American communities in fostering worthwhile movements in the innermost heart of America. Last night, it was United Americans, and their spiritual blitzkrieg in the Municipal Auditorium.

In May another big spiritual movement will be centered in, and its forces of construction will radiate from, Kansas City. This will be the Fiftieth Anniversary of the publication of Pope Leo XIII's great, historic letter on the condition of the workers of the world.

Bishop O'Hara, of Kansas City, is inviting scores of the most eminent scholars, labor leaders, moral and theological philosophers and scientists—Jews, Protestants and Catholics alike—to a one-day feast of reason, and flow of soul, in honor of the initiative taken fifty years ago by one of the world's greatest modern leaders of the religious reconstruction of society.

The *Kansas City Journal,* of course, will promote this notable event.

Probably the *Kansas City Star* will do so likewise. But that fact will not, and should not, wipe away the disgraceful blot on journalism which the failure of the *Kansas City Star* to report the rally of United Americans has dropped on the pages of the history of our Press.

The Stage & Screen

The Talley Method

WALTER PRICHARD EATON in the latest number of *Harper's* in an article entitled "The Plight of the Dramatist," lays the present low condition of the American drama to the public itself; not to its being stupid or uninterested in the theatre, but to its intellectual and ethical chaos. The modern dramatist finds himself unable to employ the old themes which once were the backbone of the drama because they have to do with concepts, ethical, moral or religious no longer believed in by the mass of theatre-goers. I am in complete agreement with Mr. Eaton. We are living in an age in which woman's virtue is in many circles no longer looked upon as important, when family ties are disintegrating, when, in short, few who make up metropolitan audiences seem to believe in any spiritual or moral order. Of course a playwright can write about merely material things: the revolt against poverty and physical inferiority, against social inequalities, even against boredom, but as these things have at root a spiritual basis, the playwright doesn't get very far even here. His plays are shallow, barren, even if the people are superficially well observed. He uses the microscope rather than the telescope, and the result is that too often he sees not the stars or the cosmic law, but merely crawling bacilli.

There are, however, honorable exceptions, and of them is S. N. Behrman, the one true master of comedy the American theatre possesses today. Mr. Behrman knows that things are not as they should be, but until recently he had been content simply to show up the forces at work, standing outside them, letting their protagonists speak for themselves. Urbane, tolerant and open minded, he has given each side its opportunity to put its best foot forward. This is the mark of the comic dramatist of the more liberal type. In his latest play, however, he begins to show signs of wanting to enter the arena as a participant. The theme of *"The Talley Method"* is: a distinguished surgeon whose utterly materialistic type of mind, admirable as it is in dealing with his patients, fails utterly in its relations with his children and with the woman he wants to marry. Mr. Behrman sees that materialism is the death of life, and steps down from his ivory tower to combat it. Unfortunately, however, he is only as yet half armed. He knows his adversary, but he hasn't the weapons to kill him. He possesses irony, but irony is after all a form of self indulgence, a sop to one's stultified moral revolt; and when Mr. Behrman is indignant he turns not to words that sear, but to this irony. Now I am not at all sure that Mr. Behrman should try to enter the arena. As a comic dramatist who exhibits the forces that are struggling for mastery he is unrivalled. Moreover he is a master of the unspoken word, of saying more than his mere lines appear to utter. As such he magnificently poses the problems that confront us. Perhaps he would do well to allow others to find the remedy.

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"The Talley Method" is finely acted by Ina Claire, Philip Merivale, Ernst Deutsch and Hiram Sherman, but it is not the equal of Mr. Behrman's masterpiece, "End of Summer," or even of "Biography." Yet many of its lines and scenes are Behrman at his best, and at his best he has no superior among living writers of comedy. *(At Henry Miller's Theatre.)* GRENVILLE VERNON.

Jest and Youthful Jollity

THERE'S something appealing about a nice, pleasant chap like Henry Fonda, even when as Charles Pike, the ophiologist who has been up the Amazon for a year, he's a hopelessly unworldly mope. His family is rolling in money (for generations, they've made ale—"Pike's Ale that won for Yale") but that hardly excuses him for being such a sucker. You really feel sorry for him when he's taken in by the Harringtons (Charles Coburn and Barbara Stanwyck), a father-daughter team of professional sharpsters who could trim such an innocent babe even with "a pack of calling cards." They fleece him first at poker; then when Barbara's heart is touched, she finishes him off in the game of love. Preston Sturges has become Hollywood's master satirist-in-cinema. ("The Great McGinty" laid out the machinery of politics as "Christmas in July" unmercifully kidded advertising and merchandising.) Now in his latest triumph, *"The Lady Eve,"* his victims are the love game—and sex. As might be expected the result glitters with wit and ridicule that is hardly for youngsters, or for some oldsters either. Sturges has again directed his own clever script superbly, and as in his other films, he succeeds in accomplishing the unbelievable feat of showing that he expects his audiences to have intelligence. Using sarcasm, symbols, short-cuts and an unimportant though interesting fable-for-moderns, he refuses to talk down to movie fans. From his cast, principals and supporters (William Demarest, Eric Blore, Melville Cooper, Eugene Pallette) he gets first-rate performances. Although he allows his scoundrels to play loosely with morals and gain their ends, he never approves of them. He knows people and their foolishnesses and he does a good service by exposing them. In "The Lady Eve," the situations and remarks are cynical and disillusioning. Full well might the poor, defenseless male take warning from Stanwyck's "A moon-lit deck is a woman's business office," and later, "It's a good thing he wasn't up the Amazon for *two* years."

In a more kindly playful mood, but still aware of what's going on, Joe Pasternak presents his new production. *"Nice Girl"* is such charming comedy, with delightful family intimacy and friendliness, in its first two-thirds, that it is unfortunate it had to go haywire toward the end when it ran into script trouble and substituted forced farce and a tacked-on patriotic note for a story solution. In his good direction of an outstanding cast, William Seiter shows his understanding of comedy. Scientist Robert Benchley, befuddled and lovably human, is naturally confused by the problems of his three motherless daughters, but he is wise in his counsel. Daughters Anne Gwynne and Ann Gillis seem almost able to take care of themselves, but the middle daughter, Deanna Durbin, doesn't know much about worldly things except the "habits of rabbits." A little bored with the boy next door (Robert Stack), she makes a young girl's mistake, throws herself at handsome Franchot Tone who, with a twinkle in his eye, is amused, unresponsive but understanding. While Papa Benchley has daughter troubles, a backstairs romance goes on between Helen Broderick and Walter Brennan. This unpretentious story is pepped up with funny lines, humorous situations and some songs well sung by Deanna, who is full grown up now and is as pretty and charming in her ninth picture as she was in her first.

Errol Flynn tries to woo the comic muse too in his new mystery drama "Footsteps in the Dark," but the results are pretty heavy-handed. Our modern-dressed Sea-Hawk-Lord-Essex is somewhat ill at ease in deserting his Virginia-City-Santa-Fé trail. However Errol is not entirely to blame for the picture's dullness. Director Lloyd Bacon does not give all the assistance he should, even in guiding the performances of such established movie folk as Ralph Bellamy, Alan Hale, Lucile Watson and Allen Jenkins. But mainly to blame are the scriptwriters whose idea of mystery and humor is in this story of an investment counsellor who secretly authors satirical murder novels and is an amateur detective besides. Our hero, in his glory when he's smarter than the police in solving a who-done-it, becomes really interested in a new case, especially when his wife (Brenda Marshall) is involved. But false clues, lack of motivation, detective story clichés and old fashioned attempts at humor make the unlifelike characters in the cast seem unreasonably slow in discovering that the least suspicious and least concerned man is the guilty one. Best scenes are in a burlesque house where Flynn comes (with a typical audience) to watch Suspect Lee Patrick do a strip tease, and in a dentist office where the suspense and drilling keep you on edge.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Problems, Unlimited

American Farmers in the World Crisis. C. T. Schmidt. Oxford. $3.00.

THE AMERICAN "farm problem" is roughly and summarily something like this: that the agricultural population by and large are not leading the kinds of lives and have not the economic prosperity they feel is correct, and the rest of the country joins in that feeling. Also the country is not satisfied with the direct and indirect effects upon urban and the whole national life which agriculture has for some time exerted. Furthermore there is grave concern over the preservation of our natural resources. Finally, American agriculture has not the influence upon other nations, nor they upon American agriculture, which we would like. There is clearly no end of the farm problem. It touches everybody's life importantly, and embraces the whole life of farmers—in this country the life of about "32,000,000 people . . . living on 6,800,000 farms (1935)."

Any useful general view of American farming prepared for the general public must include a huge quantity

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of descriptive material, and much which is at least indirectly theoretic, scientific and philosophic. Dr. Schmidt's book of 332 pages covers a mass of material which is not easily pigeon-holed and remembered, but he succeeds in presenting it so that a reader can feel more enlightened than bewildered.

The "World Crisis" of the title is not the war; or rather, the war may be a special part of the crisis. It appears that the principal characteristic of the crisis here meant is the existence of an actual and potential supply of American farm commodities impractically large in relation to effective demand for them. Should men and land be taken out of agriculture? If so, how, and into what activity will the men go; and if not, how are the men and land to be "conserved" according to decent standards? The first two of the nine chapters on "American Farmers in the World Crisis" give a good quick survey of the position of our agriculture, showing policies, trends and world and national events which have made it terribly difficult. They describe somewhat the economic processes of our farms and especially of farm markets. Dr. Schmidt emphasizes the identity of the farm problem with that of our whole national system—an identity forced by the fact that American farming is predominantly commercial farming, agriculture meshed in the workings of markets and swept by technology based on a general science: ". . . the dilemma is ultimately one of our whole economy, not merely of agriculture."

There is not much in the volume, probably because there is proportionately little to tell, about farmers' self-help, individual or combined, in meeting the crisis. A little about cooperatives; a few words about part-time farming. The book underemphasizes ideas and news about farmers taking care of themselves. The author does not let us forget, it is true, that some farmers prosper by their specially fortunate position or talents, brains and energy. This is important in showing the disparities and classes on the land; and in order to get perspective on the whole picture. Chapters III through VII tell the story of farmers in politics and of the measures taken to "aid agriculture" through government. It is a very full story indeed, and the analysis of the varied and elaborate efforts undertaken by the New Deal make up the major portion of the volume. It is hard to get straight all the laws and administrative programs, and it seems to me that they are presented here more as a chronicle than they might be, and less organized according to function.

Except for the soil conservation work, New Deal farm activities are pictured largely as "crisis" actions, adjusted to the strenuous problems of the short term—the depression—which could not be thrust aside. The attempt to control commodity prices by interferences in the chaotic individualistic market had matured before Roosevelt's inauguration. The New Deal developed government efforts to guide and check the prices of farm products through the market much further, and carried along efforts to dispose of "surpluses"—the final actions so far being barter with England, and food stamps for relief. The various "adjustment" programs, involving acreage allotments, were more radical attempts to bring supply down to demand. Soil conservation was worked in here. Thirdly, the New Deal is commended for facing the fact of rural poverty and organizing national efforts for the first time designed to benefit first and directly the poorest farmers—those largely out of the market. This job is now signalized by

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the widespread activities under the Farm Security Administration. Credit, tenancy and financial assistance of many kinds were worked into the program everywhere. The steps taken have been extremely numerous, and they have been dovetailed more and more expertly along the line: restrict output, practice soil conservation and approved methods of farming and farm business, and receive in return various payments for various stated reasons from the government. There is a design for giving a subsidy to farmers without giving so much of a subsidy to farm products that an increased amount of them will be brought to market.

The government was pushed almost inevitably to frame plans around the upper class of farmers, because they are the ones who have the great production which influences national and international prices and markets. "As a rough generalization, we can divide all farms operating in 1929 into two groups, each comprising about half of all the farms: (1) those producing more than $1,000 worth of products, including goods consumed by the farm family; and (2) those producing less than $1,000 worth. The more productive group, comprising 51 percent of all the farms, produced 89 percent of all farm products sold and 58 percent of all farm products consumed by farm families." The slogan for this commercial agricultural section is "parity," a very vague term to be sure, but one which does underplay the "way of life" idea, and emphasize the business, buying and selling side. A business parity for agriculture is shown inescapably to necessitate increased government regulation. Indeed, one meaning of "parity" could be stated as equal checks to laissez-faire, in production and competition, for farming as for urban industry, and an equal monopolistic control. Farmers get much more of their "rationalization" through the government than business men do—who get a lot.

There is no possible debate about increasing control for agriculture, according to this book. Schmidt considers the character of the control the practical problem—does it have to be bureaucratic? will it be governed by the richer groups? how centralized must it be in formulation and execution? how effectively and broadly can farmers participate in planning and control, etc.? The New Deal valiantly tried to bring as much farmers' democracy in handling the planning and execution as it felt compatible with working toward the goals conceived to have been set democratically on a national basis. The principal objectives, requiring a subordination of parts, were assumed in grappling with particular agricultural tasks. There was a genuine attempt at democratic centralism, according to Schmidt, and the principal democratic tool was the county committee—even though, especially in the South, the committees can hardly be considered the epitome of democracy. The book describes many successes and many failures in the democracy of the farm program, just as there were successes and failures in reaching the particular objectives of the program. The author worries especially about the workings of selfish agricultural pressure groups, and he rejoices particularly in the New Deal's special efforts—however inadequate and subordinate—for the "disadvantaged" of the farm population.

The book is no chart of progress. It cannot be, because the author, like the public, has no clear or stated philosophy of community life or of farming. The dilemmas stated at the beginning of the book remain at the end. There is no statement of what farm life ought to be, nor what system ought to be used by citizens to exchange goods. There is no study of production for the family in relation to production for exchange. In general, there is very little about population problems and the vitality of the community and the influence of agricultural life upon them. The "biological" approach to productive and conservation problems and to social problems is subordinate to the logic of economy based on a development of the present social, economic and political systems, and on the logic of past mechanical achievements and tendencies. The book does not satisfy one, any more than the prospects of the American farmer do. But the farm problem is a huge complex of problems, and this book is designed as a limited descriptive analysis of the condition as it recently has been. It is a good book for what it does; this final feeling of dissatisfaction may not be inappropriate.

Incidentally, Secretary Wallace appears in the book as head of a tremendous work: as clearly second after Roosevelt in the New Deal. PHILIP BURNHAM.

An Agricultural Testament. Sir Albert Howard. Oxford. $4.50.

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER readers, particularly those in our cities, when they think of the farmer's problems at all, have in mind such difficulties as shrinking markets and mounting surpluses of the five principal export crops. The public pays plenty for food, yet we are only vaguely aware that the farmer himself doesn't get enough for what he grows. Applying normal business principles, the average citizen would probably argue that American farm problems could be solved by eliminating some of the middle men, curtailing production, finding industrial uses for agricultural products, concluding trade agreements with other nations, stepping up domestic food consumption by various methods, etc., etc. According to such figuring it is really a simple application of the law of supply and demand. Yet even before the present war, all these things had been debated and tried without providing a serious answer to the perennial difficulties of our rural areas.

Americans have a great capacity for hope; we are always expecting something helpful to turn up. Repeated failure has not kept us from advocating and doggedly trying singly or severally all these ineffectual farm remedies. It is too bad that we are still unwilling to admit the proved inadequacy of such a program. And it is too bad that by far the most convincing book to indicate the only possible way out should in certain chapters be too technical to hold the average reader. Only here and there does Sir Albert Howard succeed in dramatizing his well-tested conclusions as to the way of salvation for modern agriculture. They are based on 40 years experience and research in England, India and the West Indies. A number of his methods bear a marked similarity to biodynamics.

Lovers of the outdoors will be delighted by the first chapters in the book, which give evidence of the author's conviction that Nature's methods of agriculture—in the primeval forest, the prairie and the ocean—hold the clues for successful and continuous cultivation of the soil. "Mother earth never attempts to farm without livestock; she always raises mixed crops; great pains are taken to preserve the soil and prevent erosion; the mixed animal and vegetable wastes are converted into humus; there is no waste; the processes of growth and the processes of decay balance one another; ample provision is made to maintain large reserves of fertility; the greatest care is taken to store the rainfall; both plants and animals are

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left to protect themselves against disease." Here is Sir Albert Howard's program in a paragraph.

The author ranges appositely and entertainingly through various civilizations, eras and sectors of the modern globe to find evidence for his contentions. He focuses attention on the world-shaking effects of the Industrial Revolution. He finds that the Chinese peasant in his attention to returning wastes to the land has come closest to the ideal set by Nature. How else could so concentrated a population have maintained itself for centuries? On the other hand mass-production, one-crop farming with artificial fertilizers has meant that "soil fertility is rapidly diminishing in the United States, Canada, Africa, Australia and New Zealand." Speeding up growth we have failed in the absolute essential of a comparable speed-up of the processes of decay.

The book is crammed with information. It shows how soil fertility can be restored, describes the highly successful Indore process of utilizing vegetable and animal wastes to the full and discusses the problem of soil aeration. The factual evidence the author adduces to show that his methods will cure even plants already diseased is overwhelming. And equally successful cures are registered by nourishing livestock with feed produced by the same "natural" methods. The reduction in the cost to society of human illness and disease that would result from producing food by these methods staggers the imagination. For all our increased knowledge of sanitation and other health factors, the twentieth century's susceptibility to disease is one of our most costly weaknesses. How the adoption of Howard's type of agricultural reform would add to the sum of human happiness!

As the author sees the problem: "The situation can only be saved by the community as a whole. The first step is to convince it of the danger and show the road out of this impasse. The connection which exists between a fertile soil and healthy crops, healthy animals, and last but not least, healthy human beings must be made known far and wide." That is the problem. How can the American farmer with his preoccupation with mounting surpluses be aroused to take an interest in maintaining the balance of the wheel of life? How can he be persuaded to undertake the diversification needed to do this? That would require revolutionary changes. How can the ideal of the family farm unit be successfully dramatized in these producer, profit-minded United States? Albert Howard's testimony is the most convincing I have thus far encountered. What I wonder is how rural life leaders can popularize these principles in the face of the present tendency toward agricultural mechanization, mass-production, specialization and proletarianization.

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In the Groove

VERDI'S *Requiem Mass,* written for the first anniversary of the death of his friend, the poet Manzoni, has always been strictly a work for concert performance in this country—although it has been given often, with the utmost feeling and solemnity, in memory of important deceased musicians. That it is Latin music, and operatic, is not quite as telling an argument against it as Nordic critics in the past have pretended. Victor's new recording of the *Requiem,* superseding one made in 1930, is excellent indeed. Tullio Serafin, the Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra of Rome and four soloists perform it beautifully, even if there is lacking the coruscating quality—and the hair-raising trumpets and drums in the *Dies Irae*—of a Toscanini performance. Basso Ezio Pinza, Soprano Maria Caniglia, Contralto Ebe Stignani do very well, but Tenor Beniamino Gigli is overly sweet (album M-734, $10.50).

Three familiar symphonies are on the current lists, each very good of its kind. The one and only symphony of César Franck, the *D Minor,* is played by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the Minneapolis Symphony (Columbia album M-436, $5.50) with energy and more crispness than Victor's familiar Stokowski version; but for many people, myself included, this work has lost its interest in too many concert and radio performances. The same can be said, even more positively, of Tchaikovsky's *Sixth ("Pathétique") Symphony.* But the current recording by Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic (Victor album M-553, $6.50) is so straightforward, so sonorously recorded, in contrast with Stokowski's current mannered interpretation for Columbia, that the symphony takes on new life. Then there is the *Fourth Symphony* of Brahms. Musicians say that the greatest of Brahms is the particular symphony they happen at the moment to be playing. In hearing the Boston Symphony under Dr. Koussevitzky in the *Fourth* (Victor album M-730, $5) you are likely to feel that the real Brahmsian greatness comes in the last movement here recorded with tonal splendor.

Columbia's album of *South American Chamber Music* (M-437, $4.50) is an anthology to be welcomed, presenting songs and pieces for violin, piano and cello, not only by the familiar Brazilian Villa-Lobos but by others from half a dozen nations. They are of unequal merit, however, some sounding like Parisian salon music of the last two decades. In the conventional chamber music line, the Schumann *Piano Quintet in E flat Major* is expressively played by Jesus Maria Sanroma and the *Primrose Quartet* (Victor album M-736, $4); the Mozart *"Hunting" Quartet in B flat Major,* played by the Roth Quartet (Columbia album M-438, $3.50), is not flawless, but this is the only version of its lovely melodies now available. Robert Casadesus plays two Mozart piano sonatas, in F and D, with buoyancy and brilliance (Columbia album M-433, $3.50): this is one of the most satisfactory offerings of the month.

Recommended single discs: Russell Bennett's *Hexapoda—Five Studies in Jitteroptera,* played by Louis Kaufman, violinist, with the composer at the piano (Columbia). . . . Chopin's *Polonaise Brillante,* arranged and played by Emanuel Feuermann on the cello (Victor). . . . *An Orchestra Rehearsal* by Theodore Cella, played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler; a tuneful

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and realistic sounding glimpse into the rehearsal hall (Victor). . . . Bach's *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring,* by Myra Hess, pianist; a beautiful chorale which long ago she made her own (Victor).

Among the more or less popular album sets, I enjoyed especially *American Folk Songs* (Victor album P-41, $2), by the American Ballad Singers whose director, Elie Siegmeister, recently collaborated with Olin Downes on a fine anthology of these songs. The renowned sometime convict, "Leadbelly" (Huddie Leadbetter), sings prison songs, accompanied by the Golden Gate Quartet, in *Midnight Special* (Victor album P-50, $2). Mrs. Laura C. Bolton's recordings of *Indian Music of the Southwest* (Victor album P-49, $6.75) are interesting anthropologically, but tend to become rather dull musically; it takes a Stravinsky to get in the primitive groove with these drums and rattles. *A Victor Chenkin Recital* (Columbia album M-435, $3.50) captures marvellously the personality of this Russian who here sings of Eastern European Jews in Yiddish and Hebrew.

On the jazz side, Erskine Butterfield and his small band continue to produce some of the smoothest, this time tackling an old favorite, *Beale Street Mama* (Decca), with simple and eloquent results. A new recording company, Keynote, has a couple of fine discs from *Pins and Needles,* by Harold Rome: the satirical *Song of the Ads* and the Broadway spiritual, *Mene Mene Tekel,* which is about Belshazzer, that mean old razzer-dazzer. The winners of Tommy Dorsey's "Fame and Fortune" contest see their names in print on one of the month's records: *Oh! Look at Me Now* by John DeVries and *You Might Have Belonged to Another* (Victor) by Pat West and Lucille Harmon. Topnotch lyrics, and worth studying as examples of what makes a song tick.

Once a year *Metronome* polls its readers for their favorite jazzmen, and sponsors a record starring them. This time, it's *Bugle Call Rag* backed by *One O'Clock Jump* (Victor). One feels a little hesitant about putting the thumb down on a cast which includes Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Harry James, *et al.,* but this disc incorporates some of the worst faults a jazz rendition can have.

Entertainment for the young: Tony Pastor's *Hep-Tee-Tootie (the Juke-Box Jive)* (Bluebird), with a sweet trumpet chorus by Max Kaminsky, and Glen Miller's lively musical satire, *The Volga Boatmen* (Bluebird). Benny Goodman hits a little closer to his old stride with two new recordings: *Benny's Bugle* and *I'm Always Chasing Rainbows* (Columbia). Their feeling of continuity and purpose—lacking in most of Goodman's recent releases—may be due in part to the good work of Basie at the piano. Sliding in on the hot trombone of Floyd O'Brien, *I'll Come Back to You* (Decca), played by Bob Crosby and his Bobcats, gets off to a nice start.

Artie Shaw and his Gramercy Five run through *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume* (Victor) with good clarinetage and powerful support from Nick Fatool on the drums. The rest is pure hokum, throwing in a corny muted trumpet and Mickey Mouse effects on the harpsichord. Recommended listening: two reissues, *Mahogany Hall Stomp* by Louis Armstrong and *Nagasaki* by Paul Mares and his Friars Society Orchestra (Columbia); *Exactly Like You* by Teddy Wilson (Columbia); Ethel Waters singing *Georgia on My Mind* (Bluebird); *Bill Coleman Blues,* recorded in Europe by Django Reinhardt (Victor).

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The Inner Forum

RURAL LIFE is one of the principal concerns of the Catholic Conference of the South, which has recently published at 810 East Grace St., Richmond, Va., "Proceedings" of the first annual conference at Atlanta, held last April. Agricultural problems will comprise an important part in the considerations of the second annual conference to be held next month. Some 70 percent of the pepole in the Southeast, it is to be remembered, are rural.

The Catholic Conference of the South is largely an outgrowth of the National Catholic Social Action Congress held in Cleveland in June, 1939. The "Proceedings" include the Cleveland talk on "The New South" by Archbishop Stritch of Chicago, who said in part: "A damaging one-crop system of agriculture has proved suicidal and today the South faces the fact that it has lost the world cotton market and its control of the world tobacco market is greatly weakened. Its hospital facilities are the poorest in their embrace of the nation and its school advantages are lamentably inadequate. More than half its farm land is cultivated by tenants and sharecroppers, whose return for their labor is a miserable pittance, inadequate for decent living and housing. Its land ownership is in large measure in the hands of outsiders. . . ."

Dr. T. H. McHatton of the University of Georgia told the conference that "if we are to develop in the South the economy and life that all desire, it seems to me that the dominating industry, if I may use the term, of this section, namely, farming, should receive the first consideration. . . ." Richard Reid, former head of the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia, said, "The first step necessary for us is to produce here the agricultural products which we can grow and for which we are now paying tens of millions elsewhere. We shall have that money then to buy things which we cannot produce. . . ." The conference also considered the South's industrial problems.

Several references were made to the belief that "the Southland is the nation's No. 1 religious opportunity." And when Father Cunningham of the Paulists told of his experiences with the St. Lucy Chapel car in Tennessee he spoke of the problem, "how to hold our rural people on the farm." He said that "pigs raised, eggs sold weekly, potatoes planted, cotton raised—*for the Church,* are the means used now to assure the Church of a steady income. . . . It is a wonderful mission field, the rural folk are ready for our faith. . . ."

CONTRIBUTORS

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